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RHMFISS/COMMARCORBASESJAPAN CAMP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RUHEHMS/COMMARCORBASESPAC CAMP H M SMITH HI PRIORITY
RUHPSAA/COMMARFORPAC PRIORITY
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI PRIORITY
RHOVVKG/COMSEVENTHFLT PRIORITY
RUALSFJ/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: MOD TO ASSIGN PERSONNEL TO HAWAII AND GUAM TO
PROMOTE REALIGNMENT

REF: TOKYO 2508

¶1. (C) In line with private Japanese government statements (reftel), media reported 20 October that the Japanese Ministry of Defense (MOD) has decided to assign nine officials to Guam and seven others to PACOM beginning in September 2009 in order to promote US force realignment initiatives, particularly the Marine relocation to Guam. MOD contacts confirmed the press reports and noted that the Ministry is also working to establish a new office under the Bureau of Local Cooperation (BLC) that would deal specifically with the Guam relocation and provide administrative support and oversight to the dispatched officials.

¶2. (C) Ministry staff say the officials will not be on permanent assignment, but will be sent on long-term TDY status to work with the Joint Guam Program Office (JGPO) and PACOM in order to enhance coordination in developing the Guam master plan. The officials will also assist in developing the bidding process for realignment-related construction projects on Guam. MOD officials emphasize that the establishment of these new positions and the new BLC office is part of the Japanese government's efforts to demonstrate not only monetary commitment to Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI) implementation, but also to show determination to push forward the project by establishing the necessary bureaucratic structure to do so.

¶3. (C) Post understands that the assignment of the personnel and establishment of the new office are both subject to the approval of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication (MIC), as well as budgetary resources from the Ministry of Finance (MOF), possible reasons for the decrease from the originally stated plans to assign forty personnel (reftel). MOD contacts anticipate, however, that the Ministry will receive approval and budgetary authority for the new assignments as they expect realignment matters will receive less scrutiny in the Diet than other issues MOD is currently facing, such as the recent training death of a Japanese sailor and PM Aso's proposal to dispatch JMSDF vessels to an anti-piracy mission to Somali waters.
SCHIEFFER